DATELINE: 99 BETHESDA, MARYLAND JULY 21, 1976
ALINA ZERANSKI

AN AMERICAN DREAM: OWNING YOUR OWN BUSINESS
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE: BETHESDA, MARYLAND -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, A REPORT PREPARED BY ALINA ZERANSKI ON A VISIT WITH A WOMAN WHO PROVED THAT YOU CAN BECOME A MULTIMILLIONAIRE WITHOUT REALLY EXPECTING IT.

NARR: AT LUNCH TIME, IT IS HARD TO FIND A TABLE AT THE POPULAR HAMBURGER HAMLET IN BETHESDA, MARYLAND, A FASHIONABLE SUBURBAN COMMUNITY OF WASHINGTON, D.C. IN THIS INFORMAL, FAMILY TYPE RESTAURANT, EVERYBODY FEELS COMFORTABLE. THE WALLS ARE DONE IN DEEP RED BRICK. PRIVATE BOOTHS ARE DIVIDED BY TALL DARK WOOD PANELS. WALL HANGINGS ARE AUTHENTIC RENDITIONS OF SHAKESPEAREAN SCENES BY A WELL KNOWN ARTIST. THE FIRST HAMBURGER HAMLET OPENED ITS DOORS TWENTY SEVEN YEARS AGO; IT WAS THE "DREAM-COME-TRUE" OF AN ALMOST PENNILESS COUPLE, WHICH ALWAYS DREAMT OF OWNING A SMALL BISTRO ON THE FAMOUS SUNSET STRIP IN HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA. TODAY, THEY OWN TWENTY RESTAURANTS AND FOUR MORE WILL BE IN OPERATION SOON.

TAPE CUT ONE -- LEWIS

"WHEN I WAS NINETEEN YEARS OLD, I CAME FROM CLEVELAND, OHIO, TO CALIFORNIA, AND I HAD IT IN MY MIND TO BECOME A DRESS DESIGNER... WHEN I GOT TO CALIFORNIA, I HAPPENED TO GO TO A PLAY..."

NARR: THIS WAS MARILYN LEWIS, WHO TOGETHER WITH HER HUSBAND, STARTED AND MADE THE ENTERPRISE SUCCESSFUL. SHE MET HARRY LEWIS IN THE THEATER WHERE HE PERFORMED. VERY SOON THEY WERE DEEPLY INVOLVED WITH EACH OTHER AND SEARCHING FOR WAYS OF MAKING A DECENT LIVING WITHOUT FORSAKING THEIR CHOSEN CAREERS.

TAPE CUT TWO -- LEWIS

"EVERY SIX MONTHS, WARNER BROTHERS WOULD PICK UP HIS OPTION. AND THIS MADE HIM SO NERVOUS EVERY SIX MONTHS THAT HE THOUGHT HE MIGHT LIKE TO OPEN A RESTAURANT, JUST TO MAKE ENDS MEET, AND STILL CONTINUE WORRYING ABOUT HIS OPTION BEING PICKED UP AT WARNER BROTHERS EVERY SIX MONTHS. PLUS THE FACT THAT HE THOUGHT THAT OWNING A RESTARUANT WOULD BY A VERY GOOD SHOWCASE FOR HIM AS AN ACTOR. SO IN HIS MIND, HE REALLY NEVER CONSIDERED IT AS A CHAIN AMBITION, OR AN AMBITION TO HAVE MANY MORE THAN ONE, BUT MERELY HIS OWN LITTLE CABARET WITH HIS OWN COTERIE OF FRIENDS AROUND HIM,"

OPT MARILYN LEWIS BELEIVES THAT THE TRICK FOR SUCCESS IS COMING OUT WITH A NOVEL IDEA AND WORKING HARD. STUFFED CABBAGE SERVED OVER A COUNTER WITH NO COSTLY ENCUMBRANCE WAS NEW IN CALIFORNIA. THEY PICKED UP A PLACE WITH AN INVITING LITTLE PATIO FOR SOME ADDITIONAL TABLES, AND FEARFULLY SIGNED THE LEASE. THERE WERE FUNDAMENTAL OBSTACLES: NEITHER OF THEM KNEW A THING ABOUT RUNNING A RESTAURANT. THEY STARTED WITH A TWO-BURNER STOVE AND TWO FIVE-LITER SOUP POTS. MARILYN BECAME THE CHEF, WHILE HARRY BROILED HAMBURGERS OUT IN FRONT.

TAPE CUT THREE -- LEWIS

"HIS IDEA FOR THE NAME WAS STUPENDOUS... HIS NAME WAS VERY, VERY PLEASURABLE TO LISTEN TO. IT WAS HAMBURGER HAMLET, AND HE PICTURED HIMSELF AS HAMLET... I CONCEIVED THE MENU THAT IT WOULD BE AN ANTITHESIS. ON THE ONE HAND, IT WOULD BE A BISTRO TYPE OF PLACE WITH NO FANCY FRILLS, SO THAT EVERYONE WOULD FEEL AT HOME. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THE MENU WOULD BE THE FOOD THAT YOU COULD ONLY FIND IF YOU VISITED MAYBE HALF-A-DOZEN GOURMET RESTAURANTS. SO I MIXED THE HAMBURGER WITH THINGS LIKE LOBSTER BISQUE SOUP, FRENCH ONION SOUP FONDUE, CHERRIES JUBILEE, CREPES SUZETTES, CHEESE BLINTZES, SWEET AND SOUR CABBAGE... AND EVERYTHING THAT YOU WOULD ORDER WOULD COME WITHOUT FRILLS, BUT ON A LITTLE BISTRO PLATTER AND BE ABOUT A DOLLAR."

NARR: THE HAMLET WAS A SMASH HIT FROM THE START. THE LEWISES WORKED LONG DAYS. MANY MOTION PICTURE PERSONALITIES PATRONIZED THE RESTAURANT. IT WAS AN INEXPENSIVE BOHEMIAN PLACE WHERE PEOPLE MIXED REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIAL OR FINANCIAL STATUS. SOON, SUBURBANITES DISCOVERED IT AND WERE INVITING THE LEWISES TO OPEN SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

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EACH TIME THE LEWISES LAUNCHED A NEW, HAMBURGER HAMLET, IT WAS LIKE BUILDING A DREAM HOUSE ALL OVER AGAIN, ONLY THEN THEY HAD MORE MONEY AND EXPERIENCE. FOR A LONG WHILE THEY STILL PURSUED THEIR ORIGINAL CAREERS. MARILYN, UNDER THE NAME CARDINALE, BECAME A SUCCESSFUL DESIGNER WITH HER OWN DRESS FACTORY. BUT AFTER TEN YEARS OF HECTIC PACE, SHE DECIDED THAT HER TWO GROWING SONS AND THE CHAIN OF HAMBURGER HAMLETS WERE MORE IMPORTANT, AND SHE SOLD HER DRESS BUSINESS.

TAPE CUT FOUR -- LEWIS

"NOW I HAVE TO ADMIT SOMETHING TO YOU: I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO COOK, BUT I BOUGHT A COOK BOOK AND I TAUGHT MYSELF HOW TO DO IT."

NARR: HARRY LEWIS IS THE PRESIDENT AND FINANCIAL HEAD, WHILE MARILYN AS CHAIRPERSON, IS BUSY DESIGNING AND LAUNCHING NEW RESTAURANTS. THE HAMLETS LOST THEIR BOHEMIAN CHARACTER, BUT HOLLYWOOD LEFT A LASTING IMPACT ON THE OWNERS. AT 47, MARILYN LEWIS, WITH HER YOUTHFUL FIGURE AND COMPLEXION, HER CURLY RED HAIR AND ORIGINAL ATTIRE, LOOKS LIKE A MOVIE STAR. THE HAMLETS PRESENT NOW A MIX OF GLORIFIED HAMBURGER FARE WITH SOME EUROPEAN FOODS AND ARTISTIC DECOR. THERE ARE NO FROZEN DISHES SERVED.

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THE BETHESDA OUTLET IS ESPECIALLY DEAR TO MRS. LEWIS' HEART. HERE SHE EMPLOYS MANY STUDENTS WHO NEED PART-TIME JOBS. THIS LED HER TO A REWARDING EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C. HER COURSE, CALLED "AN AMERICAN DREAM - OWNING YOUR OWN BUSINESS," LURED SEVENTY STUDENTS. IT WAS THE LARGEST CLASS ON CAMPUS. SHE LOVES TO EXCITE THE YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.

ANNCR: THIS HAS BEEN DATELINE: BETHESDA, MARYLAND -- PICTURES IN SOUND OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE VOICE OF AMERICA EACH WEEK AT THIS TIME. TODAY, YOU HEARD ABOUT THE HAMBURGER HAMLETS. NEXT _____ ANOTHER DATELINE.

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